

Message Text

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ORIGIN IO-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /004 R

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DRAFTED BY: IO/UNP:MWILLIAMSON

APPROVED BY: IO:RREIS

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R 131613Z MAR 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1829

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 056352

FOLLOWING REPEAT PORT MORESBY 0215 SENT SECSTATE INFO
CANBERRA DATED MARCH 12.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 0215

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, PP

SUBJECT: INDEPENDENCE DAY PLANNING

1. DAVID MARSH, HEAD OF UNIT IN CHIEF MINISTER'S OFFICE CHARGED
WITH PLANNING INDEPENDENCE DAY CEREMONIES, GAVE ME THE FOLLOWING
INFORMATION CONFIDENTIALLY AND INFORMALLY:

2. DATE: THE CHIEF MINISTER IS DETERMINED THAT INDEPENDENCE
WILL BE NO LATER THAN JUNE 28, AND PREPARATIONS ARE BEING
WORKED OUT ON THAT ASSUMPTION. MARSH APPROACHED TEI ABAL,
LEADER OF UNITED PARTY, ON CHIEF MINISTER'S BEHALF, AND TEI ABAL
SAID HE WOULD GO ALONG WITH SOMARE ON THE DATE. FINAL DECISION,
HOWEVER, WILL NOT BE MADE UNTIL APRIL SESSION OF HOUSE OF
ASSEMBLY. (SEE COMMENT.)

3. DURATION: IT IS PLANNED THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF FOREIGN
GOVERNMENTS WILL ARRIVE IN PORT MORESBY JUNE 27. INDEPENDENCE
WILL BE PROCLAIMED ON JUNE 28, WITH EXTENSIVE PUBLIC CEREMONIES,
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INCLUDING AN EXCHANGE OF GIFTS. JUNE 29 WILL BE DAY OF PRAYER

WITH ECUMENICAL CHURCH SERVICES. JUNE 30 WILL BE DEVOTED TO CULTURAL ACTIVITIES (DANCING, PAGEANTS, ETC.) AND SPORTS EVENTS. IT IS ASSUMED THAT GUESTS WILL DEPART ON JULY 1, SOME TO TRAVEL WITHIN PNG, OTHERS TO RETURN HOME.

3. REPRESENTATION: THERE WILL BE A RELATIVELY SHORT LIST OF COUNTRIES WHOSE HEAD OF STATE WILL BE INVITED, AND MARSH EXPECTS THE UNITED STATES TO BE ON THAT LIST. THE REASON IS "BECAUSE PNG WOULD NOT BE A NATION EXCEPT FOR U.S. MILITARY ACTION IN WORLD WAR II." MARSH RECOGNIZES THAT IT WOULD BE MOST UNLIKELY THAT PRESIDENT OR VICE PRESIDENT WOULD ATTEND BUT THEY HOPE SOME SENIOR PERSON WOULD REPRESENT THE UNITED STATES. HE ASKED HOW LARGE A RETINUE OUR CHIEF REPRESENTATIVE IS LIKELY TO BRING.

4. GIFT: THERE WILL BE A PUBLIC EXCHANGE OF GIFTS. SOME NATIONS, SUCH AS AUSTRALIA, WILL GIVE GIFTS WORTH MANY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. OTHERS WILL OFFER THEIR OWN HANDICRAFTS, WITH A LOW MONETARY VALUE. THEY WILL BE EQUALLY APPRECIATED IF THEY ARE PRESENTED IN THE RIGHT SPIRIT. PNG WILL RECIPROCATATE WITH ITS OWN HANDICRAFTS. MARSH HALF WAY SUGGESTED U.S. MIGHT WANT TO BUILD A WING OF THE NEW NATIONAL LIBRARY. I POINTED OUT THAT A GIFT OF SUCH PROPORTION INVOLVED HAVE HAD TO BE PLACED IN OUR BUDGET MACHINERY TWO YEARS AGO. HE THEN SUGGESTED FURNITURE FOR A ROOM IN THE LIBRARY, OR BOOKS. HE SAID SWEDEN WAS GIVING THE WOOD PANELLING FOR A ROOM IN THE LIBRARY. HE SAID HE HOPED SOME COUNTRIES WOULD PRESENT A LETTER STATING THAT PNG ARTIFACTS, NOW IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THAT COUNTRY, WOULD BE RETURNED TO PNG WHEN PNG HAD ADEQUATE MUSEUM FACILITIES TO DISPLAY THEM (THAT DAY, HE ADDED, WOULD BE FAR IN THE FUTURE).

5. EMBASSY: HE ASKED IF THIS POST WOULD BE ELEVATED TO EMBASSY STATUS SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH INDEPENDENCE. I SAID THAT I DOUBTED THAT A DECISION ON TIMING HAD YET BEEN MADE.

6. COMMENT: THE CONSENSUS AROUND TOWN HAS BEEN THAT INDEPENDENCE DAY WOULD BE IN SEPTEMBER OR LATER, AND MARSH CONCEDED THAT SOMARE AND TEI ABAL MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO PERSUADE THEIR FOLLOWERS TO APPROVE THE JUNE 28 DATE. THERE IS A GREAT DEAL TO CONFIDENTIAL

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BE ACCOMPLISHED BY THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE AND THINGS WILL HAVE TO FALL INTO PLACE NEATLY TO MAKE THE JUNE 28 DATE COME TRUE. HOWEVER, SOMARE IS A VERY SKILLFUL POLITICIAN, AND MARSH SAYS SOMARE'S ONLY WAVERING ON THE DATE HAS BEEN TO SET IT EARLIER, NOT LATER, THAN JUNE 28. (SEE SEPTTEL ABOUT OBSTACLES TO EARLY INDEPENDENCE.) OLMSTED UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE056352
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: IO/UNP:MWILLIAMSON
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750089-0553
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750353/aaaabvqt.tel
Line Count: 115
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 JUN 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <10 NOV 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDEPENDENCE DAY PLANNING
TAGS: PDEV, PP
To: USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006